

A French Kiss from a Parisian Girl

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Summary: Alice is in London for a couple gigs her punk rock band is running, when she comes across a most fascinating French girl who couldn't really be more different from her. Despite Marianne's clear lack of interest in Alice's punk scene or her band, Alice pursues.

A French Kiss from a Parisian Girl

Alice was like a tumbleweed. She never stayed in one place for too long. She couldn't say what it was, just that after too long in a placeâ€"and 'too long' really varied depending on where she wasâ€"she started itching to move somewhere else. Sometimes her mum said in exasperation that Alice had probably walked around the whole of Britain by now. Alice just shrugged and carried on. She was used to her mother's disapproval, but she couldn't imagine ever settling into the conventional life that her parents wanted for herâ€"a rickety old house in their tiny Wessex town, a marriage that wasn't passionate but wasn't terribly awful either, two to three little brats running around tugging at her legs and maybe a small, quiet career.

Instead, Alice wore Sex Pistols t-shirts with the sleeves cut off (she liked to pretend the jagged cutting job had been on purpose, for style) and started a punk band with her older sister Iona and a kid named Vlad that Iona had met in university. Vlad was alright; he did a decent job on bass and he and Alice shared a semi-closeted love of the occult. She didn't believe it when he predicted her future with tarot cards (and mum was appalled), but it was fun (perhaps partly because mum was appalled).

Iona didn't move around as much as Alice, but since they had band gigs sometimes, she had to keep a tracer on where her little sister was, and at least be close enough that she could drive over on a day's notice. Right now, Iona was in London, where she'd gotten a job giving tours on those bright red double decker busses that everyone associated with London. Alice mocked her endlessly for it, but she

quieted down when Iona gave her free rides through the city. Technically speaking she wasn't supposed to, but they'd never been caught, and Alice liked it better than taking the subway. She wasn't crazy about London as a whole—“too big, too crowded, too smelly”—but there was a good punk scene, so she ventured in fairly often. Plus bigger cities meant more chances for band gigs. And when she was riding with Iona, she could take a seat up on the second deck behind her sister and make the occasional snide remark about Iona's jokes, or correct her facts, or make a nuisance of herself in some other way.

She was up there today, slouched against the hot plastic seat, which had spent the day baking in the sun, or under tourist bums before Alice had sat down there. She wanted to tell Iona she was thinking of shaving the right side of her head, because she wanted an opinion. She'd kept it long so far, although the undersides of her pigtails were dyed bright pink. It was her one homage to femininity that she hadn't given up yet, but she was thinking about it. A pixie maybe. Or just the side shave, or maybe an undercut. Pigtails were starting to feel too mainstream since the release of Suicide Squad, and the unfortunate nearness of Harley Quinn's shade of pink to Alice's. But Iona was busy prattling on about St. Paul's Cathedral during WWII so Alice reached for her battered iPod, hiding itself in some crevice of her brown knapsack.

Down below, the clatter of a large crowd making their way onto the bus made itself apparent. Inwardly, Alice groaned. Large groups were always noisier and she hated pointless chatter. Worse, they started heading for the stairs. And as they began to make their way up, Alice could detect the distinctly not-English blabber. A group of college-age girls began to stream up, all beautiful and fashionable and terribly, terribly French. Alice watched them from beneath the intimidating furrow of her brow. One of the last girls to come up was wearing a little tiara nestled around the charming bun her hair was done up in, and it was such a ridiculous touch that Alice was on the verge of snorting before she took notice of the young woman's face.

Even Alice, who prided herself on maintaining a sarcastic, detached attitude (never mind how quick her temper was), had to stop herself from gaping. A jawline that could kill, wide blue eyes perfectly framed with tasteful eyeliner and mascara, and shapely lips that couldn't possibly have been such a florid shade of pink naturally, yet Alice had to wonder anyway. It wasn't until she turned her head to watch the woman take a seat that she realized she was indeed staring, and quickly jerked her head forward again. She had taken six years of French, but it all seemed to have taken a swan dive off the edge of the bus, because she couldn't make sense of a single word coming out of the French girl's mouth.

She looked up at Iona for answers, but her sister just shook her head, making her short red braid twitch from side to side. Alice slouched back in her seat and tugged at the bar piercing in her left ear, trying to think of something witty and clever to say in French, but all she could think of was her seventh grade teacher saying over and over again, “Où est la toilette?” in her nasally voice.

When Alice's stop came up, she still had not thought of anything to say to the tiara-sporting girl, and was growing a bit desperate. She decided to skip her stop and...and she wasn't sure. Maybe she'd

think of something before the Frenchwomen got off.

They dismounted four stops after Alice's, and she found herself getting to her feet to follow.

"Keep staring, maybe she likes a stalker," Iona whispered to Alice on her way by, with a nasty grin. Alice scowled at her.

"Go fuck a stop sign," Alice snapped back, slinging her bag over one shoulder and taking the steps two at a time. Outside the eyesore of a bus, the Frenchwomen were congregated on the sidewalk, all seven of them trying to read the same map, a few looking at their phones to compare.

"C'est là," one of them said, pointing right.

"Non, c'est là!" disagreed another, pointing forward.

"Je veux visiter Westminster!" objected Alice's quarry.

"Non, non, on est d'accord!" one of the other women said, crossing her arms.

"Moi, je vais visiter Westminster," said Alice's object of desire, shrugging with an immovable expression.

"Moi, je veux visiter Westminster aussi," piped up a girl with wavy black hair braided with a shiny red ribbon.

They all spoke so damn fast, and all their words blurred together! Alice could pick out a few things, but she wished with frustration that she could've understood all of it.

"Bien, le trouver toi-même," the tiara-girl was told. The five others moved off, leaving Alice's person of interest and her friend, checking her lipstick with her phone camera.

"Hey, you looking for Westminster?" Alice blurted out, and both girls looked up. Hell, she hoped they spoke English; her French wasn't nearly good enough to flirt with this girl!

"Euh, yes," said Alice's hopeful. "Do you know where it is?" Her words were heavy like getting out of bed on Sunday morning, with a French accent.

"Of course I do," Alice snorted. Like she'd have asked at all if she didn't know! "It's that way." She pointed. "I can show you." Without giving them a chance to say no, she started off, hoping they'd just follow. If they didn't, she supposed this worked just as well—she'd keep walking and never have to see them again after making a fool of herself.

"Were you not on the bus?" The question to her right let her know they'd come, and she felt a little puff of relief. "Are you visiting also?"

"No. Well, yes. I'm here for work," she told the other woman importantly. Mum didn't count the band as work—she pointed to Alice's job at the movie theater as her "real" job—but Alice counted it and Mum wasn't here to call her out.

"Ah, oui?" Alice could feel them both staring at her, and she forced herself not to feel self-conscious about her torn-up jeans and grunge t-shirt. Mum hated the torn up jeans, she always asked why Alice would spend money on something that was already ruined. "They make you look homeless," she'd said, to which Alice replied something like "You just don't get it!". "What work is that?"

"Music," Alice replied.

"I'm Angelique," offered the be-ribboned girl when her companion didn't offer further questioning. After a pause, she held her hand out, but something in Alice's look made her withdrawal. Shaking hands was for the elderly and businessmen in pinstripe suits.

"Alice," she replied.

"I'm Marianne," said the angel. Even her name sounded elegant and perfect.

"Isn't that the lady on that one painting?" Alice asked. "The symbol of France?" A little smile tugged at Marianne's lips.

"Oui. That's me," she joked.

"What are you doing in London anyway?" The question came off more hostile than Alice had intended, and she silently cursed herself.

"We have Monday off school, so we thought we would take a trip," Marianne said. Angelique nodded and scanned her phone for a text message.

"Yeah? Couldn't have picked a more clichÃ©d place to go," Alice said. "Besides Paris. What's Westminster got for you?" The girls blinked. "Why d'you want to go to Westminster?" she clarified.

"I want to see the poets' graves," Marianne replied at once.

"I want to see the architecture," Angelique said.

"Poetry? You like English poets?" Alice asked Marianne, drifting closer to her on the sidewalk. Of course she loved something all posh and poncey like poetry. So why did it feel more like a good thing than a detractor from Alice's overall analysis of the hot French girl?

"Poetry in general," Marianne replied. "I write it. In French."

"Huh. It's a bit ancient, isn't it?" Alice said. Marianne shrugged and for a moment Alice feared she hadn't understood again, but then she responded.

"I like the Old World elegance of it," she said. "It's so beautiful. You don't like it?" It was Alice's turn to shrug.

"I like more modern things," she said. "But you know, whatever gets you off." Marianne and Angelique exchanged a look, but Alice didn't bother explaining that one. The fee for Westminster was 20 pounds per

entry and the line was way too long, but both the French girls insisted on going. Alice groaned. "Oh come off it, everybody and their mum goes to Westminster; don't you want to see something more exciting?"

"I want to see Westminster," Marianne insisted stubbornly. Grumbling curses under her breath, Alice got in line with them. She herself had never actually been inside, for precisely the reasons she didn't want to go now, but she wasn't willing to part from Marianne just yet. Marianne babbled away to her companion in French, but occasionally turned to Alice to say something, or draw her into the conversation, and every time Alice caught those dark blue eyes looking at her it felt like someone had punched her in the gut.

Inside, even Alice had to admit the place was impressive. A sentiment she expressed with a hushed, "Bleeding hell." One of the curators snapped her head over at them with such a heated glare that, with a sheepish smile, Marianne quickly ushered them down one of the halls. The sheer number of graves was pretty damn impressive too, but Marianne kept weaving around, looking only for the poet's corner. Angelique trailed behind, taking in all the vaulted ceilings and scalloped window sills, wishing she could take pictures.

When they found the poet's corner, Marianne waved them on, and stopped. She'd be there a while. The other two girls wandered off, but Alice circled back to Marianne fairly quickly while Angelique went on to examine the rest of the cathedral. Marianne reached out reverently to some of the graves, but didn't actually touch any of them. She looked around them with a wondrous look on her face and Alice, who wasn't religious, would have sworn there was something angelic in the Frenchwoman's face. It was at least a quarter of an hour before Marianne pulled herself away and saw Alice hanging around the edge of poet's corner.

"You didn't have to wait," she said, catching up with the English girl.

"It's fine," Alice said, shrugging one shoulder and looking away, feeling her cheeks burn a little.

"Where's Angelique?"

"I don't know, she went that way." Alice pointed, and they followed the red velvet rope to the far end of the cathedral, where Angelique was peering at some boxed relics.

"Ready to go?" she asked. The other pair nodded, and on their way out, Marianne and Angelique were positively gushing to each other in French, almost certainly about the cathedral. "Hey, can you take us to the Tower of London?" Angelique asked, turning back to Alice and pointing to a spot on the map.

Alice groaned. "You two are prime prey for tourist traps! Don't you want to see anything that's not on the travel page for London?"

"We want to see the tower where Jane Grey was kept!" Marianne said. Alice heaved a weary sigh and resigned herself to looking like a dumb tourist while she showed the two French girls around. After the Tower of London, Marianne and Angelique wanted to take the stupid boat ride

down the Thames, but Alice put her foot down, mostly because she was running out of money.

"We could get lunch instead," Angelique suggested, interrupting Marianne and Alice's argument. Alice relaxed.

"Yeah, lunch sounds like a better idea," she agreed. Marianne looked doubtful, but eventually she gave in as well.

"Well where should we go?" she asked.

"Nowhere around here," Alice said. "Everything here is going to cost your left nut." That earned her another pair of bemused stares.

"Look, we can take the trolley back to my sister's neighborhood, we can get lunch there," she suggested. They all agreed on that, and Alice led them off.

Marianne played with her phone on the ride, and Alice watched her. The way Marianne tucked a loose lock of hair behind her ear had to have some sort of Renaissance inspiration.

"Have you ever been to France?" Marianne asked her, looking up. Alice snorted.

"No. I don't travel on the continent," she said.

"Why not?"

"What's there that I can't get here in Britain?" Alice asked. As a matter of fact, she'd never even been to Northern Ireland, because something about boats seemed awfully sketchy, and Alice couldn't swim. It was stupid, but it wasn't like France had anything great that Britain didn't!

"Good food," Marianne said, looking back down at her phone.

"Hey! You fucking ass, I'm going to feed you," Alice exclaimed. Marianne seemed unconcerned.

When they arrived at Iona's place, Alice let herself into the run-down apartment and went to the kitchen.

"You can sit," she said, waving a hand at the other two as she put a kettle on. Marianne and Angelique took a pair of plastic seats at the table and looked around, perhaps wondering what they'd agreed to.

"I'm sure we've got leftovers." Officially speaking, she didn't live here, but she spent a lot of weekend nights at Iona's place. She began to dig through the fridge and uncovered some pork from the night before. She took the plastic wrap off and stuck the dish in the stove to warm it up, and took a seat at the table with the girls.

"I thought you didn't live in London," Marianne said.

"I don't, this is my sister's place," she said.

"So where are you from?" Marianne asked, while Alice wondered if she could put her hand on the table and maybe accidentally brush Marianne's.

"You wouldn't know it," she said, making a face and shaking her head.

"It's a shit little town in Wessex."

Very quickly Alice began to wish she was better at conversation, because there were so many awkward silences between the three of them and it was so tempting to just bury herself in her phone and leave the two Frenchwomen to talk. So when they finally found some point of conversation, which was looking at dumb pictures on Imgur on Angelique's phone, they were all glad to absorb themselves in it wholly. It was Angelique who interrupted, pointing past Alice into the kitchen and said:

"I think your stove is, euhâ€¦smoking."

"What?" Panicked, Alice jerked around in her seat and remembered the pork. "Oh, fuck me." She jumped out of her chair and pulled open the stove door to a cloud of smoke. Hissing, she grabbed a towel and pulled out the pork dish, setting it in the sink. "Fucking hell. Jesus." It was a charred mess. She poked at it with a knife and blackened flesh flaked off. She groaned loudly, and Marianne came over to have a look. Alice leaped back as Marianne leaned over her shoulder and they collided. Marianne's confused and slightly concerned look alternated between Alice and the remnants of the pork.

"Maybe we should order out," she suggested. At that moment, the front door swung open and Alice could hear Iona putting her keys away. There was a pause, and then, as Iona had a chance to breath in the smell of the apartment:

"Alice! I told you to stay the fuck away from my stove!" Iona burst into view and it was hard to miss the incriminating pork still smoking in the sink. "Haven't you learned your lesson already? Shite, you could have at least waited for me to get home! You didn't even say you were here!" She went over to jab at the pork herself, and then noticed the company. Ginger brow knitting together, she glanced between Alice and the French girls before sighing. "Go order from that Indian place, would you?"

Forty minutes later, the tiny table had dishes for four crammed onto it and they were piling their plates with sub-par curry and samosas.

"Alice thinks you're pretty fit," Iona commented upfront to Marianne, and Alice choked on her rice. As she pounded her chest, her sister went on trying to kill her. "But you probably get that a lot, huh? What brings you to London, modeling work?" Marianne smiled, her ego stroked by Iona's remarks, even though she didn't actually know what Iona meant when she said Alice thought she was 'fit'. Before she could reply though, Alice stomped on Iona's foot, making the redhead jerk her leg up and bash her knee into the table, rattling their cutlery and tipping over Angelique's thankfully empty cup.

"Bitch! It's true," Iona said. "Don't get so worked up."

"Shut the fuck up you twat," Alice hissed.

"We're here because we had a three day weekend," Angelique said, righting her glass. "From school."

"Oh yeah?" Iona sneered briefly at Alice and then turned her

attention back to the other girls. "Where're you from? Paris I bet."

"How insightful of you," Alice said, rolling her eyes. "Guess they're from the only city in France you know."

"Well we are from Paris," Marianne said. "Orâ€"well, Angelique was raised in Seychelles, but we both live in Paris now. We're going to the Sorbonne." That caught the attention of both British women.

"The Sorbonne?" Iona asked, staring. "You're going to the Sorbonne?"

"For what?" Alice asked, finding Marianne at least three times as attractive thinking she might be smart. Might be? She had to be! No one got into the Sorbonne being an idiot.

"French literature and history," Marianne replied.

"Architecture with a minor in race studies," was Angelique's answer. Silence lapsed over them as Iona, the most gregariously conversational of the four, was absorbed in silent amusement about her sister trying to date some French poet from the Sorbonne.

"So what do you really do here?" Marianne asked Alice to break the quiet, spearing a bit of chicken. "You said you work in music."

"We have a band," Iona declared with a grin before Alice could reply.

"A band?" Angelique asked. "What kind of band?"

"A punk rock band," Iona said. "It's us and Vlad. We had a show two weeks ago; it was pretty killer. Hey, Alice." Iona nudged her. "You should show 'em the CD."

"Oh, yeah." The idea dawned on her. She could totally seduce Marianne with her guitar skills, for sure! She went off and dug through a box of Iona's CDs and band merch until she uncovered the CD and popped it into the radio on the kitchen counter. What followed could only be described as the screaming of tormented rodents on the second plane of hell. It was every shitty teenage garage band rolled into one and the French girls had to fight the urge to cover their ears above all else. "Oh here, this is a good one," Alice said when the first song was over, skipping to another one.

"Isn't this the one we did for that festival audition?" Iona asked as Alice turned up the volume.

"Yeah. I still can't believe we didn't get in."

"Dumb shits are probably deaf," Iona theorized, helping herself to some more curry of an uncertain color. They probably are now, Marianne thought.

"So, what do you think?" Alice asked Marianne, taking her seat again with folded arms. Marianne's eyes flicked subtly over to meet Angelique's and they tried to think of something to say.

"Euhâ€|not really my taste," she said, not prepared to lie and say

she'd enjoyed it. God, she might have to listen to another CD and she didn't think her ears could take that.

"What, you need more accordions?" Alice demanded, her lips twisting in a bit of a sullen pout.

"No, just somethingâ€|quieter."

"Damn French don't have any musical taste," Iona declared. "I told you Alice."

"How else could they submit a song about a mustache to Eurovision?" Alice asked, mercifully tilting her chair back to shut off the radio.

"At least ours was entertaining," Marianne muttered.

"Entertainingly stupid," Alice replied.

By the time they had wrapped up their meal and cleaned the dishes, it was early evening, and Angelique was of the opinion they should head back to the hotel.

"We haven't seen the Eye yet though," Marianne protested.

"We can see it next time," Angelique reasoned. Marianne sulked. Alice stirred her tea anxiously and then said:

"If you want, I can take you," she said. "We can find your hotel afterwards." That brightened Marianne up a bit.

"Okay, yes! Let's do that." Angelique seemed uncertain, but Marianne was set on going to see the London Eye, so they parted ways once they'd made sure Angelique could find her way back to the hotel alone. Then Alice and Marianne set off for the Eye.

"We should reach it by dark," Alice said, checking the map on her phone to make sure she wasn't going to get them hideously lost.

"Perfect! Does it light up?" Marianne asked.

"Erâ€|yeah, a bit," Alice said. She'd never before wished she had more information about typical tourist sites in London, but it would've been nice to be able to tell Marianne something she might actually want to hear, and not "hey that's the corner where so-and-so was beheaded".

They did reach the Eye by dark and Marianne was apparently charmed.

"I want to go up," she said.

"No way," Alice balked. "It's too expensive and I've been on too many stupid attractions today!"

"Don't be like that," Marianne said, rolling her eyes. "I'll pay, let's go." She grabbed Alice's hand and pulled her over to the line. If Alice had been planning on protesting more, she surrendered just for the pleasure of holding Marianne's hand. She did pay the fee for

both of them, and they found themselves in a capsule with a couple and their little kid. "Alice, look at the view!" Marianne leaned over to look out at London as the capsule began to rise up.

Alice had thought it would be pretty boring; it wasn't like she hadn't walked all over London before! But somehow seeing it from above gave her a whole other view, and she joined Marianne at the rail to look.

"Wow," she breathed. "I mean, I know it's big butâ€¦damn, it's huge!" The mother glared at her over the curse word, but neither of the young women took notice.

"It's pretty from up here," Marianne said. Like you, Alice thought, but blessedly managed not to say aloud.

"It's alright," Alice said with a shrug, looking away.

"You're not impressed?" Marianne asked. "Are you not impressed by anything?"

"I think you're prettier," she blurted out. Marianne was surprised for a moment and then smiled a little, and Alice felt her face heat up.

"Prettier than a whole city?" she asked. "How kind of you."

"Don't mock me!" Alice snapped, the tips of her ears going red in the dim light.

"I'm not," Marianne said. "You're so tense!" She was thinking something like "tightly wound" but wasn't sure how to express it in English.

"Taise-toi!" There, she remembered something. Marianne laughed.

"You speak French?"

"A bit," Alice muttered. "Not enough to give you directions to Westminster."

"So you had to be so kind as to take us there," Marianne said, suspecting by now that Alice had done it out of interest in her. "How sweet." She leaned over and kissed Alice's cheek, making the woman's face flush crimson.

"Hey! That's my fucking personal space, keep your damn face out of it!" She swatted uselessly at Marianne.

When they stepped out of their capsule into the cool evening air, Alice stretched her arms and wished she'd thought to grab a jacket on her way out.

"Soâ€¦do you want to go grab a drink or something?" she asked.
"There's a bar I like on the way to your hotel." Marianne tipped her head to the side, thinking about it, and then nodded.

"Alright, I have time. Let's go!" She wasn't sure how keen she was on the idea of spending time in Alice's type of English bar, but it was

part of the experience, and she did want that.

Alice led them expertly through the darkening streets of London, and when a couple of men on the street corner catcalled them, Alice flipped them off with some very colorful words, making Marianne giggle.

"What's so funny, huh? Did you like them yelling at you like that?" Alice demanded defensively.

"Just you. You're so you have lots of fire," Marianne said, after pondering how to phrase what she wanted to say. "It's good. I like when people are passionate."

The bar was every bit as loud and crass as Marianne might've feared, but it wasn't overly crowded, so Alice found them a relatively undisturbed table and they ordered a couple of drinks.

"What's your choice?" Alice asked. "Sex on the beach isn't bad." Marianne shrugged.

"Sure, I'll have one of those." One turned into two, and then three for Alice, and they were both hopelessly giggling over the hair of one of the sports announcers on the football game the grimy old TV was showing.

"You know, you are so fucking fit," Alice said, turning to Marianne, drink still in hand. "And you just you have great fucking tits. You probably get that a lot. But for real, for real," she said as Marianne gave her an odd look, "the first time I saw you I thought 'I don't know if I want her or her tits. Or both.'"

"And what answer did you arrive at?" Marianne asked, resting her chin in her hand. Her big eyes were half-lidded and Alice wasn't sure she was trying to be seductive or falling asleep.

"Both," she said, nodding sagely. "Both. See that's the thing about girls is you never know if you want to fuck them or be them or both."

"I can usually tell," Marianne said.

"Oh, you like tits too? Oh that's great," Alice said, nodding and quickly setting her drink down so she didn't spill it. "Shit. I forgot to even ask. Fuck. Sorry. But you do? Brilliant."

"I like your pigtails," Marianne said, reaching out to run a hand over one of them. "Why pink though?"

"I dunno, blonde seemed boring," Alice said with a shrug. "I don't like it anymore though, I'm going to change it. Maybe cut 'em off."

"Ah, oui?"

"Yeah, I been thinking maybe a nice pixie," Alice bragged.

"But then where will your lover put their hands when you fuck?" Marianne asked, clearly seeing through to the important things.

"You like getting your hair pulled?" Alice asked, leaning in a little closer. Marianne tipped her head to the side.

"Only when it's down," she said.

"I could maybe arrange that," Alice offered. "I don't have a car but there's a loo back that way." She jerked her thumb.

"Please stop talking, you're the most unromantic person I have ever met," Marianne said. Figuring a tipsy, verging on drunk Alice wasn't going to stop just at her behest, Marianne silenced her with a kiss. Alice seemed all too glad to give into that, and she leaned in pressing harder. Someone on the other side of the bar gave a hoot and Alice raised her middle finger. Marianne slid her tongue between Alice's teeth and the English girl suppressed a noise. She wanted to feel Marianne up, but she wasn't sure they were going that far yet, so she just put her hand on Marianne's knee. When the need for air became too great, and they finally separated, Marianne said, "We should probably go."

"Yeah, let's go." Not sure where this was going, but hopeful, Alice paid the bill and they exited. Now she really wished she'd brought a jacket, but she was still flush with heat from the bar and Marianne's kiss, so it wasn't too bad yet.

"Do you want to come back with me?" Alice asked after a pause, glancing between Marianne and the sidewalk. It was a moment before Marianne replied, looking up at the streetlamp beside them.

"I should get back to the hotel," she said.

"We have a show next weekend," Alice said hastily in a new effort.
"You should come or something."

"Maybe," Marianne said. "I'll probably be busy with school."

"Oh. Yeah. Well. You're welcome for your bloody tour anyway," Alice said, kicking the sidewalk.

"Thank you for showing us around," Marianne said. "Will you be able to get to your sister's house?"

"Yeah I'll just take the bus," she said, still looking down at her worn-out combat boots.

"You want me to wait with you?" Marianne asked.

"No," Alice said, "I know how to get there." Marianne walked with her to the bus stop and stayed anyway though, until Alice had gotten on and the bus had pulled away. Then she found herself a cab, because she wasn't going to bother trying to find her way back alone and tipsy.

"Did you get laid?" Iona called from the couch as Alice let herself into the apartment. "Judging by that look I'd say not," she observed as Alice trudged in.

"Piss off Iona. She had to go back to her hotel," Alice growled.

"And she didn't invite you. Pity."

"I said piss _off_." Alice went into the kitchen, but Iona's kitchen was regrettably empty of beer.

"Ah, don't be so touchy, we all miss sometimes," Iona said over the sound of the TV. Alice wasn't in the mood to talk to her sister, even for some gruff comfort, so she ignored it and got herself a cup of water, then retreated to Iona's room. They'd swap places later when Iona was done watching TV, unless she was in the mood to let Alice share the bed.

Marianne proved to be harder to forget than Alice might've hoped.

The next weekend, Alice and Iona's band, Death Metal Fairies, performed at an outdoor festival with a number of other amateur bands. The festival was primarily rock and absolutely Alice's kind of scene. Still, when she got up on stage with her guitar, she thought she would have been more excited if she knew Marianne was in the crowd. She hadn't even thought to get the French student's address or phone number or anything. And Alice wasn't stupid, she knew Marianne hated the music.

The show went well and they got plenty of shouts and whistles from the gaggle of ragged teenagers assembled in front of the stage. Then they had about ten seconds to pack up all their shit and get off the stage before the next band was up. As Alice slung her guitar bag over her shoulder and they headed across the grass, she noticed someone waiting around. Must be a woman; she could see the outline of a skirt swishing against the figure's legs in the twilight illumination.

"Are people allowed back here?" Vlad asked Iona, who shrugged.

"Was that the song you played for me at the apartment?" the figure asked. "Or something new?"

"You couldn't even fucking tell, could you?" Alice stopped a few feet away and crossed her arms.

"I couldn't. Green looks better with your eyes," Marianne observed, looking at Alice's freshly-dyed hair, which she'd worn down and ratted today.

"I thought you weren't interested in coming," Alice said. "Thought you had class or some shit." Marianne shrugged one shoulder.

"I found some free time," she said. Alice toed the grass for a moment. She had assumed when Marianne turned her down for the show it was her way of saying she wasn't really interested.

"Soâ€|do you want to watch the rest of the show?" she asked. Marianne let out a breath, contemplating staying for what could be another couple hours of shitty screamo bands.

"Honestly? I would prefer to go get dinner. I'll pay this time," she offered. Alice looked over at Iona and Vlad.

"I'll catch up with you lot later." She walked over and took

Marianne's hand. "I hope you know what a fun night I'm giving up for this dinner."

"It's not too late to change your mind," Marianne told her frankly.

"Nah, fuck 'em. I'd rather go with you."

* * *

><p>It may be clear at this point that I am not English (or British) and know very little about British punk slang. If you have any tips or phrases you think Alice would use, please do let me know! I tried looking some up, but I figure in the end its worse for the flow of the story if I misuse the slang than don't use it at all.</p>

The university Marianne is at is Paris-Sorbonne for Humanities and Language. Idk if the University of Paris (known more broadly as the Sorbonne) actually offer the classes they're saying they take.

Angelique is Seychelles and Vlad is Romania, a mutual friend of Iona (Scotland) and Alice's.

I just love shitty punk England so here she is in all her lame ass glory, enjoy. The title and the inspiration for the story come from Frank Turner's "To Take You Home". Making Alice a folk singer would've fit more with the song, but how could I resist the chance to write her like this? Here's the song if you're interested

On tumblr

End
file.